

Message Text

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SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST REPORT ON SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITY
IN AFRICA

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE BY MURREY MARDER ENTITLED "US KEEPS
OPTIONS OPEN ON SOVIET-CUBAN ACTIVITY" APPEARED ON MAY 20
IN THE WASHINGTON POST. TEXT AS FOLLOWS:

CARTER ADMINISTRATION SPOKESMEN STRESSED YESTERDAY THAT
THE TROOPS WHO INVADED KATANGA'S SHABA PROVINCE WERE TRAIN-
ED BY CUBANS IN ANGOLA AND EQUIPPED WITH SOVIET WEAPONS--A
CHARGE THAT LEAVES AMERICAN OPTIONS OPEN FOR POSSIBLE
FUTURE, UNSTATED, RETALIATORY ACTIONS.

AT THE SAME TIME, PRESIDENT CARTER TOLD A GROUP OF AMERICAN
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EDITORS AT THE WHITE HOUSE THAT THE AMERICAN ROLE IN THE
ZAIRE AIRLIFT IS "FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS" AND SUPPLYING
LOGISTICAL SUPPORT "ONLY IN THE NON-COMBAT ZONE."

"IT WILL BE A LIMITED INVOLVEMENT," CARTER SAID, AND "I'M
SURE IT WILL BE SUCCESSFUL."

WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY JODY POWELL SAID THE ADMINISTRATION HAD CONSULTED WITH CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS WHO AGREED THAT THE U.S. ACTION DOES NOT REQUIRE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL, AS IT LEAVES COMBAT FUNCTIONS TO FRENCH AND BELGIAN PARATROOPS WHILE FURNISHING BACKUP SUPPORT.

SIMULTANEOUSLY, BY EMPHASIZING A CUBAN-SOVIET LINK TO THE BORDER-CROSSING FORCE OF FORMER KATANGA GENDARMES THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WAS AT LEAST THROWING A QUESTION MARK OVER CUBA'S CONTENTION THAT IT IS NEITHER DIRECTLY NOR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE INVASION OF ZAIRE.

THE ADMINISTRATION ALSO WAS LEAVING A DOOR AJAR ON THE OPTION OF TAKING SUBSEQUENT ACTION--ALSO DIRECT OR INDIRECT--AGAINST AN INCURSION INTO AN AMERICAN-SUPPORTED NATION. A SENIOR OFFICIAL LAST NIGHT WOULD SAY ONLY THAT THE UNITED STATES IS NOT CONTEMPLATING ANY ACTIONS "AT THE PRESENT TIME"--BUT ALSO NOT RULING OUT "ANY OPTIONS."

THE WASHINGTON POST REPORTED ON FRIDAY THAT SOME ADMINISTRATION STRATEGISTS, AND PARTICULARLY PRESIDENTIAL NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, HAVE ADVOCATED FUNNELING SOPHISTICATED ARMS AND FUNDS TO THIRD PARTIES TO SUPPORT GUERRILLAS FIGHTING CUBAN TROOPS IN ANGOLA.

ANY SUCH ACTION IS NOW BARRED BY LAW, EXPRESSLY BY LEGIS-

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LATION SPONSORED BY SEN. DICK CLARK (D-IOWA), CHAIRMAN OF THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA. THIS LEGISLATION, ALONG WITH OTHER LIMITATIONS ON EXECUTIVE BRANCH FLEXIBILITY IN OVERSEAS OPERATIONS, IS NOW DESCRIBED AS "UNDER REVIEW" SINCE THE INVASION OF ZAIRE.

SAUDI ARABIA, WHICH IS KNOWN TO BE GIVING COVERT SUPPORT TO ANTI-MARXIST GUERRILLAS IN ANGOLA, IN ETHIOPIA'S ERITREAN WAR AND ELSEWHERE, HAS BEEN OPENLY URGING THE UNITED STATES TO MEET HEAD-ON THE SOVIET-CUBAN PENETRATION OF AFRICA.

VANCE AND VISITING SAUDI ARABIAN FOREIGN MINISTER PRINCE SAUD FAISAL ON WEDNESDAY DISCUSSED BOTH ANGOLA AND ERITREA, IT WAS OFFICIALLY ACKNOWLEDGED LAST NIGHT. THE BULK OF THE VANCE-SAUD DISCUSSIONS, OFFICIALS SAID, CENTERED ON THE MIDDLE EAST.

ADMINISTRATION SPOKESMEN DECLINED TO SAY WHETHER U.S. STRATEGISTS ARE CONTEMPLATING FUTURE INDIRECT AID TO ANTI-MARXIST FORCES INSIDE ANGOLA.

INSTEAD, STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN TOM RESTON SAID THAT AT PRESENT "WE ARE BARRED FROM CARRYING OUT SUCH ACTIVITIES BY THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES." THE LAW WILL BE HONORED, HE SAID.

OFFICIALS ALSO EMPHASIZED THAT NOT ONLY LEGISLATION BARRING COVERT SUPPORT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS IN ANGOLA IS BEING REVIEWED. A SENIOR OFFICIAL SAID LAST NIGHT THAT NUMEROUS LAWS "IN THE FIELD OF MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE" ARE BEING REEXAMINED TO DETERMINE IF THEY IMPOSE UNNECESSARY "CONSTRAINTS" ON THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH IN THE CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY.

CUBAN PRESIDENT FIDEL CASTRO SUMMONED THE CHIEF DIPLOMAT
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AT THE U.S LIAISON MISSION IN HAVANA, LYLE F. LANE, FOR AN UNUSUAL MEETING ON WEDNESDAY TO INFORM HIM THAT CUBA IS NOT TAKING PART DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY IN THE FIGHTING IN ZAIRE.

NEVERTHELESS, STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN RESTON SAID, IT IS "OUR UNDERSTANDING" THAT THE "INSURGENTS HAVE BEEN TRAINED RECENTLY BY CUBANS IN ANGOLA AND ARE USING SOVIET WEAPONS." WHEN ASKED WHY HE WAS MAKING THE STATEMENT, RESTON REPLIED, "I ASK YOU TO DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS."

UNTIL YESTERDAY, U.S. OFFICIALS HAD SAID ONLY THAT "THE KATANGA GENDARMES"--AS THE FORCES WHO CROSSED FROM ANGOLA INTO THE COPPER-RICH PROVINCE OF SHABA (FORMERLY KATANGA PROVINCE) ARE DESCRIBED--HAD BEEN TRAINED "IN THE PAST" BY CUBANS IN ANGOLA.

AT THE WHITE HOUSE YESTERDAY, POWELL SAID:

"I CAN SAY WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF CUBANS BEING INVOLVED IN MILITARY OPERATIONS IN ZAIRE. HOWEVER, I SHOULD ALSO ADD THAT WE DO KNOW THAT THE CUBANS DID TRAIN AND EQUIP THE KATANGANS WHO ARE ENGAGED IN THOSE MILITARY OPERATIONS, AND THEY ARE FIGHTING WITH SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN WEAPONS SUPPLIED TO THEM BY CUBANS IN ANGOLA."

RAMON SANCHEZ-PARODI, HEAD OF THE CUBAN LIAISON MISSION IN WASHINGTON, LATER YESTERDAY REITERATED CASTRO'S POSITION THAT THERE IS NO DIRECT OR INDIRECT CUBAN INVOLVEMENT WITH THE KATANGANS WHO INVADED ZAIRE.

VANCE, NEVERTHELESS, TOLD SOVIET AMBASSADOR ANATOLY F. DOBRYNIN THE UNITED STATES IS "DEEPLY CONCERNED" ABOUT
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THE SPREADING PATTERN OF SOVIET-CUBAN ACTIVITY IN AFRICA,
AN OFFICIAL SAID.

ASKED IF THIS CONVERSATION WAS SPECIFICALLY INTENDED TO
LAY THE GROUND-WORK FOR SOME MORE TANGIBLE AMERICAN ACTION
, THE OFFICIAL REPLIED "NO--NOT AT THIS POINT."

VANCE, IN MEETINGS WITH SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER ANDREI A.
GROMYKO NEXT WEEK IN NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON, WILL PURSUE
THE WARNINGS ABOUT SOVIET-CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA, OF-
FICIALS SAID LAST NIGHT. THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION
REPEATEDLY HAS CAUTIONED THE SOVIET UNION THAT THESE
ACTIONS ENDANGER THE POLITICAL CLIMATE FOR ULTIMATE
RATIFICATION OF A NEW NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL PACT, NOW IN
ITS FINAL STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS. BUT THERE HAS BEEN NO
DISCERNIBLE EVIDENCE THAT THE WARNINGS HAVE HAD EFFECT
SO FAR, OFFICIALS CONCEDE.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS PRIVATELY CONCEDE THAT THE UNITED
STATES HAS "VERY LIMITED LEVERAGE" IN ITS CURRENT PATTERN
OF POLICY TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE SOVIET-CUBAN ACTIONS
WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING THE U.S.-SOVIET NUCLEAR TALKS. THIS
IS WHY SOME STRATEGISTS ARE ADVOCATING BREAKING OUT OF THE
PRESENT LIMITATIONS OF VERBAL ADMONITIONS TO THE SOVIET
UNION.

OFFICIALLY, THE UNITED STATES YESTERDAY LOWERED ITS LIMIT-
ED ALERT FOR POSSIBLE USE OF ITS OWN TROOPS FOR A CIVILIAN
RESCUE MISSION IN ZAIRE. A PENTAGON SPOKESMAN SAID ORDERS
WERE SENT TO FORT BRAGG N.C. FOR THE 1,500 PARATROOPERS OF
THE 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION TO "STAND-DOWN" FROM THE
SPECIAL ALERT THEY WERE PLACED ON WEDNESDAY.
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